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TO: **Assignment Judges**
 Family Presiding Judges
 Trial Court Administrators
 Family Division Managers

Directive #02-25

[Questions or comments may be
Directed to (609) 815-2900, ext. 55350]

FROM: **Michael J. Blee, J.A.D.** 

SUBJECT: **Family - Revised Family Crisis Intervention Unit Manual (2025)**

DATE: **April 2, 2025**

Family Crisis Intervention Units (FCIU) provide immediate, short-term assistance to families in crisis, working to ease the situation and avoid court involvement or out-of-home placement whenever possible. However, if the youth's safety is still at risk despite all available services being exhausted, FCIUs may initiate court involvement to ensure the child's well-being.

This directive promulgates an updated Family Crisis Intervention Unit ([FCIU Manual](#)), replacing the manual published in 2005. The revised Manual details the rules, standards, and procedures governing FCIUs. It also references relevant FCIU Operational Standards and has been reorganized and streamlined. Key updates include the responsibility of FCIU staff to prepare and submit court petitions, with Judiciary staff handling the filing and processing of these petitions. The manual also specifies that Judiciary intake staff cannot reject FCIU petitions for deficiencies, but rather must inform the FCIU if a petition is deficient.

FCIUs operate under N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-76 to -90 and Rules 5:15-1 through 5:18-3, providing 24-hour on-call services to manage and stabilize juvenile-family crises as defined in N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22(g). The FCIU is expected to respond immediately to referrals, unless a preliminary investigation determines that no crisis exists or that another agency is better suited to handle the situation.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) oversees both the FCIUs as well as the Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) in accordance with N.J.A.C. 10:77, subchapter 6. While the MRSS units are similar to the FCIUs, the MRSS units provide an available face-to-face response 24-7 by a local team of trained professionals members who are qualified to assess and stabilize the youth who is having an emotional and/or behavioral health crisis and to respond to the needs of children/youth who may be at risk of losing their current living arrangement.

Since the MRSSs and FCIUs serve similar target populations, the affiliation agreement between the Judiciary and DCF includes provisions for FCIUs and MRSSs integrated into MRSS-FCIU combined units (CUs) if county Youth Services Commissions select that option. This revised manual now includes references to these combined units.

FCIUs, whether as standalone entities or part of CUs, emphasize collaboration among family members in resolving crises, recognizing that juvenile misconduct is primarily a family issue. This revised manual will assist the FCIUs and CUs by providing the legislative authority, the operational standards, the training requirements for staff, and the operational procedures for the FCIUs and CUs.

Questions regarding this Directive should be addressed to the Family Practice Division at 609-815-2900, ext. 55350.

cc: Chief Justice Stuart Rabner
Steven D. Bonville, Chief of Staff
AOC Directors and Assistant Directors
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Amelia Wachter-Smith, Chief, Family Practice Family Division